MISSISSIPPI CITIZENS' COUNCIL

A. W. Woolford

August 9, 1956

JACKSON V A HOSPITAL INTEGRATION

Integration of white and negro patients at Jackson's Veterans Hospital- despite Mississippi's claim not to have "given an inch" in maintaining segregation has set off a storm of protests.

Requests for investigations have been made by R. G. Beckwith, Vicksburg veteran, who stated that his wife was assigned to a ward shared by negro men.

A. W. Woolford, manager of the 554-bed institution denied that Mrs. Beckwith was assigned a bed from where she could see a negro male patient across the hall. He said, however, that she "was in a room where there were negro patients nearby." No separate ward for women is available at the hospital.

Woolford stated that the Veterans Hospital is almost completely integrated in both wards and dining areas. He said the only place segregation is noted in the hospital is in the barbershops. Both white and negro barbers complain they have never learned to clip the hair of members of the other race.

Woolford said V A integration began in some sections of the Nation as early as 1946, but was forced in Jackson on orders from President Eisenhower early in 1953.

Ellis W. Wright, president of the Jackson Citizens' Council praised Mrs. Beckwith for her refusal to accept accommodations at the integrated hospital, and roundly scored the "flaunting of race-mixing as an open insult." Wright called on members of Citizens' Councils throughout the state to demand action by national, state and city officials in halting race-mixing practices in V A hospitals and other government installations in Mississippi.

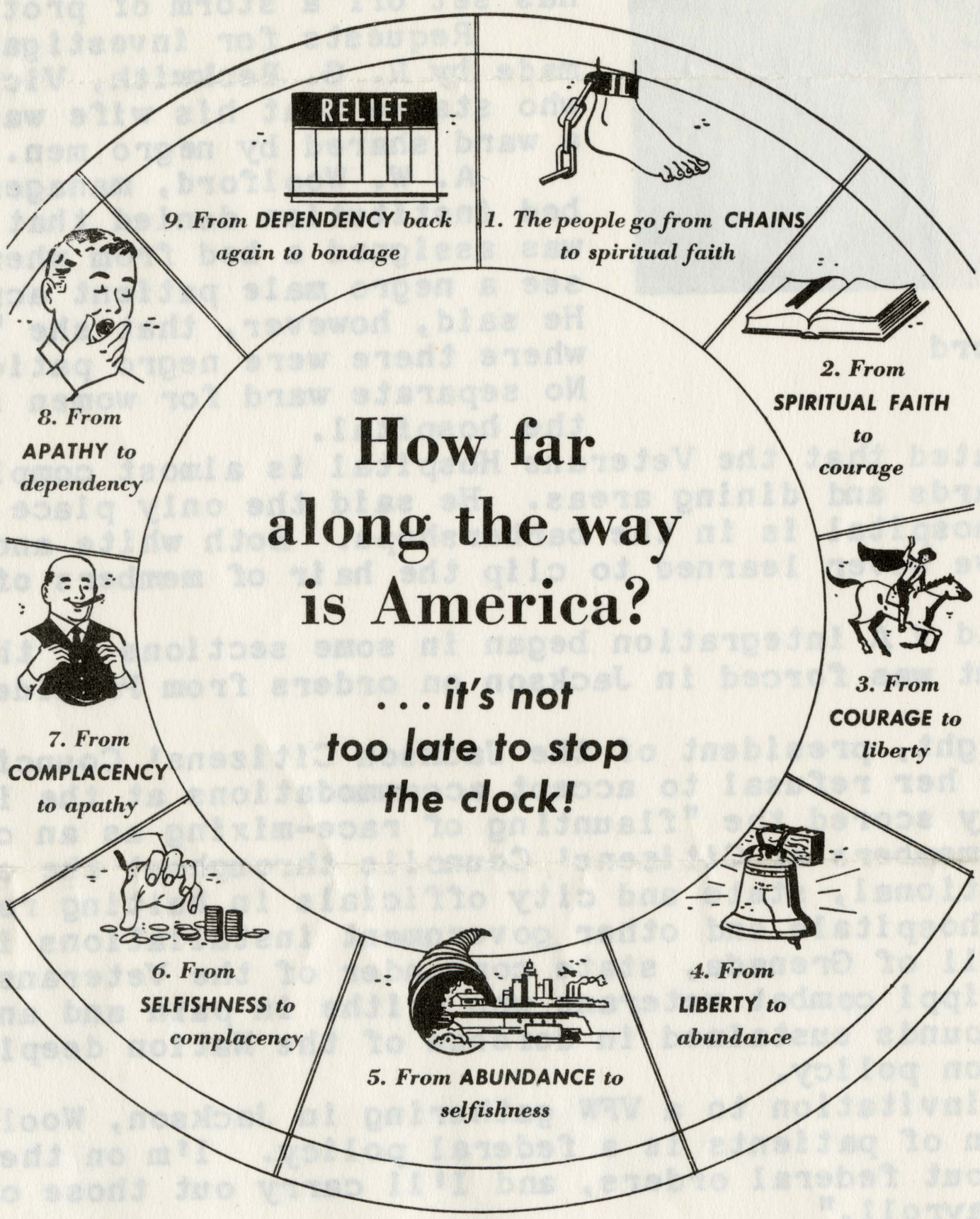
Sidney Russell of Grenada, state commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars said Mississippi combat veterans who writhe in pain and anguish on hospital beds from wounds sustained in defense of the Nation deeply resent this federal integration policy.

Speaking by invitation to a VFW gathering in Jackson, Woolford stated that, "Integration of patients is a federal policy. I'm on the federal payroll to carry out federal orders, and I'll carry out those orders or get off the federal payroll."

Commander Russell said a sense of resentment pervaded the VFW audience following the meeting and that veterans were still dissatisfied with the situation. He said, "This does not end the issue."

Amid mounting protests from legislators, officials and private citizens, a number of instances were revealed where veterans have refused treatment in the past rather than submit to integrated conditions prevailing at the V A Center among patients and visitors.

(OVER)


RELIEF
9. From DEPENDENCY back again to bondage
1. The people go from CHAINS to spiritual faith
2. From SPIRITUAL FAITH to courage
3. From COURAGE to liberty
4. From LIBERTY to abundance
5. From ABUNDANCE to selfishness
6. From SELFISHNESS to complacency
7. From COMPLACENCY to apathy
8. From APATHY to dependency
How far along the way is America?
. . . it's not too late to stop the clock!

(OVER)